

To: Pamela.Monroe@sec.nh.gov

Date: January 19, 2016

Subject: Petition to Intervene, SEC Docket No. 2015-06

Re: New Hampshire Site Evaluation Committee ("SEC") Docket No. 2015-06 Northern Pass
Petition to Intervene

Dear Ms. Monroe:

The Select Board of the Town of Dalton respectfully requests to intervene in the SEC's proceedings under Docket No. 2015-06 which relates to the proposed Northern Pass transmission line. Per the SEC's regulations, we are sending this request to you, with copies to the SEC's distribution list for this proceeding as noted in the "cc" below.

The published preferred route for Northern Pass crosses a little over 2 miles of the Town of Dalton. It appears to transect Dalton tax map parcels 413-109, 413-106, 413-122, 413-0, 413-123, 413-75.1, 413-75, 413-73, 413-71, 413-66, 413-5, 413-5.1, 413-62, 413-7, 413-8.2, 413-8.1, 414-1, 414-2, 408-106, 408-105, and 408-103.

The Dalton Select Board seeks to intervene based on a variety of impacts to the Town including without limitation, the following:

1. Concern for public health and safety

Proposed route would pass within 75 feet of a community of homes within Dalton. The Meadow Mist Home Park contains 45 homes for families including numerous children.

The Town is concerned for the public health and safety of the families living in such close proximity to the proposed power lines. In the July 20, 2015 Public Health and Safety Technical report for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement it notes the following (yellow emphasis is ours) in Section 2.1.4 titled Transmission Line Safety Issues (pg. 33):

"Under normal operating conditions, public safety hazards associated with HVAC transmission lines include electrical shocks. These can occur from working and recreating under or near transmission lines. Electrical shocks can occur from touching transmission towers or other large metallic objects near power lines. These result from voltage induced from the power line into nearby metal objects. The severity of the shock would reflect the voltage of the power line, the distance from the conductor, the size and length of the object, its orientation to the line, and how well the object is grounded. (Bonneville Power Administration [BPA] 2007)"

"DC electric fields beneath HVDC lines arise in part from ion currents which may induce charges on the body of an individual, and can discharge when the person touches a grounded surface, potentially causing shock."

"Another potential public safety hazard associated with transmissions lines is arc flashes. Arc flashes occur when electricity from a high voltage line travels between conductors through the air. The gap distance varies according to the voltage. These occur in normal conditions but also can be caused by smoke from fires (BPA 2007 and Great River Energy n.d.). Arc flashes can produce intense heat and light. If individuals get too close to energized power lines without touching them an arc of electricity can form between the power line and the person and result in serious burns (Great River Energy n.d.)."

In addition, while studies, over the past 20 or more years, on exposure to EMF (electromagnetic fields) from overhead power lines and demonstrated health effects have been inconclusive, some studies show a weak association between such exposure and childhood leukemia. Since studies can thus far neither deny nor confirm such health issues, in the interest of public health and safety, it is best that such transmission lines be located far away from such children populations or, better yet, that the lines be buried underground.

The above conditions created by overhead HVDC transmission lines are unacceptable in a community where adults walk and children live and play. Please help us prevent these serious health and safety concerns by totally burying the lines!

2. Fall Zone

Since, as noted above, the proposed route for the overhead HVDC transmission lines would pass within 75 feet of a community of 45 homes within Dalton, the Fall Radius for the towers would endanger a number of these homes.

3. Degradation of aesthetics

The presence of the Northern Pass transmission lines along the current preferred route in Dalton will result in an undesirable view from the full length of the ridgeline of Dalton Mountain. The view from Dalton Mountain out over the lines to the Presidential Range, White Mountain National Forest, the Pondicherry National Wildlife Refuge, Forest Lake, Burns Pond, Chase Bog and so forth is the same or better than that from Weeks State Park where the Department of Energy did special work to assess view impacts (July 2015 Draft Environmental Impact Statement). This degradation of aesthetics will lower property values which, in turn, will reduce tax receipts for the town and thus significantly interfere with the development of the region. It will reduce the desirability of what were once scenic hiking and back country trails sought after by residents of urban areas like Boston and New York City. It will negatively affect tourism in Dalton and surrounding areas.

4. Adverse stigma to the Town affecting its development
The Northern Pass obstructive above ground transmission lines reduces the desirability of Dalton as a residential community. Particularly when the residents of the Town are aware that towns both to the South and to the North of Dalton have buried Northern Pass lines, there becomes a stigma that Dalton is one of the "loser towns" where burial is rejected by Northern Pass. This adverse perception translates into lower property values and more difficulty marketing property having a deleterious effect on the development of the region.

5. Interference with the orderly development of the region
The degradation of the view-shed will reduce property values in the Town. Reduction in property values reduces the total amount of taxes the Town will collect. This, obviously, reduces the amount of money available for the Town budget. Dalton is not a town blessed with extensive financial resources. With a budget substantially reduced by the negative effects of this Northern Pass transmission line project, there is a clear and serious interference with Dalton's ability to develop the region of the Town.

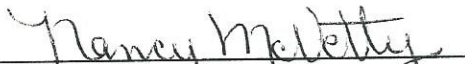
The better alternative for Dalton is to bury the line along the roads. The temporary disruption of the environment, with appropriate controls, will not bear a long-term effect on the region. There will be no impact on the view-shed thus no reduction in property values or in the tax base.


The Dalton Select Board desires to intervene and to be at the table during the Site Evaluation Committee adjudicative process to defend the Town's interest regarding the above mentioned impacts.

Thank you for your consideration of this petition.

Sincerely,

Select Board
Town of Dalton


Nancy McVetty, Select Board Chair


Kathy Barden


Jay McCusker

cc: SEC distribution list (as of the date of this email) for Docket No. 2015-06. Copies sent by email.